

OPINIONS RENDERED BY THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMISSION ON ZOOLOGICAL
NOMENCLATURE

OPINIONS 115 TO 123

OPINION 115

STATUS OF *Leucochilus*

SUMMARY.—The Commission herewith suppresses *Leucochilus* von Martens, 1881, in favor of *Leucochila* von Martens, 1860, type *Pupa fallax* Say. Any other course would involve risk of lasting and constant confusion in two rather closely allied genera.

STATEMENT OF CASE.—Dr. H. A. Pilsbry, of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, has presented the following case for opinion:

Leucochila was proposed by von Martens (Die Heliceen, 1860, p. 296, "Typus *Pupa fallax* Say") for two series of species (now ranked as two genera): *a*, which we may call the series of *Pupa fallax*, and *b*, that of *Pupa armifera*.

In 1881 (in von Martens' Conchologische Mittheilungen, p. 64) Dr. O. Boettger proposed to relegate the group of *Pupa fallax* to the prior genus *Buliminus*, and to retain the name *Leucochilus* for the relationship of *Pupa armifera*. At the same time, he cited *Leucochila* von Martens as equivalent to *Leucochilus*, as in the appended facsimile:

"II. Sect. *Leucochilus* m.

"= *Leucochila* Albers-Martens, Heliceen II. Ausg. 1860, S. 296.

"Indem ich die ungezähnten Arten der Gruppe der *P. fallax* Say aus vorbenannter Section ausscheide und sie als Section zur Gattung *Buliminus* Ehrenb. verweise, halte ich die Benennung *Leucochilus* nur für die meist bleichgefärbten, stark bezahnten, mit kräftiger, geschwungener, häufig zweitheiliger Parietal-lamelle versehenen Formen der Verwandtschaft der *P. armifera* Say aufrecht."

Q.—Can *Leucochilus* stand for the *Pupa armifera* group? Or is it synonym of *Leucochila*? Or to be rejected as homonym of the prior *Leucochila*?

Observations.—Usage is divided. Several German authors have used *Leucochilus* in the sense of Boettger. All recent American authors who have dealt with the group have apparently thought that name unavailable, having used the later name *Bifidaria* Sterki for the group containing *Pupa armifera*.

No type species has been designated for *Leucochilus* except as implied in the above extract.

The name *Bifidaria*, for the same group, was properly defined and supplied with a type. As the group is chiefly American, and does not occur in the European fauna, no name for it can be said to be generally accepted in Europe, nearly all authors mentioning the species using von Martens' nomenclature of 1860.

DISCUSSION.—The foregoing case includes two distinct questions. First, is *Leucochilus*, 1881, an objective synonym of *Leucochila*, 1860? And second, is *Leucochilus*, 1881, a homonym of *Leucochila*, 1860?

First.—According to the premises, *Leucochila*, 1860, has *Pupa fallax* as type by original designation and this type designation settles for all time the type of *Leucochila*.¹

In 1881 *Leucochilus* is essentially a new generic name, and as *Pupa fallax* is expressly excluded by Boettger from membership in *Leucochilus*, it is clear that *Leucochilus* cannot have *fallax* as its type, and therefore that it is not an objective synonym of *Leucochila*.

For *Leucochilus*, 1881, only one species was mentioned in the original publication, namely, *Pupa armifera* Say, and this is therefore type of *Leucochilus* by monotypy.

If *fallax* and *armifera* are united in one genus, *Leucochilus*, 1881, becomes a subjective synonym of *Leucochila*, 1860.

Accordingly, the first question is to be answered as follows: *Leucochilus*, 1881, is theoretically excluded from being an objective synonym of *Leucochila*, 1860, but theoretically it might be a subjective synonym.

Second.—The second question, whether the existence of *Leucochila* precludes the use of *Leucochilus*, represents one of a series of cases which the Commission has discussed for more than 25 years, but upon which the Commission has never been able to reach a satisfactory agreement involving an Opinion that can be applied to all cases. The best the Commission has ever been able to do is expressed in the recommendation of Article 36, which reads as follows:

It is well to avoid the introduction of new generic names which differ from generic names already in use only in termination or in a slight variation in spelling which might lead to confusion. But when once introduced, such names are not to be rejected on this account. Examples: *Picus*, *Pica*; *Polyodon*, *Polyodon*, *Polyodonta*, *Polyodontas*, *Polyodontus*.

In this unsatisfactory status of the results, all the Commission can expect to do is to build up a series of Opinions on special cases in the hope that these Opinions can some day be formulated into a principle. On one occasion a special subcommittee studied the question at issue and reported as follows:

The Committee is of the opinion that the use of a word as a generic name in one gender does not necessarily preclude its use in a different gender for another genus, but it considers such use eminently undesirable.

¹ *Leucochila* Albers in Von Martens, 1860, 296, *tod. Pupa fallax* Say—
 a—for *fallax*, *modica*, *chordata*, *pacifica*.
 b—*pellucida*, *riisci*, *corticaria*, *ripicola*, *contracta*, *armifera*.

In the case now before the Commission, it would appear from the premises that *Leucochila* and *Leucochilus* represent very closely allied groups. So closely allied, in fact, that the possible concurrent use of the two names might lead to serious confusion if both names were to become valid. If these two names belonged in widely different groups, for instance, in mammals and sponges, the chances for confusion would be very much reduced and another point of view might, perhaps, be entirely justified. The case represents, in fact, one very similar to *Endamocba* and *Eutamocba* and on practical grounds it is in the interest of clarity that *Leucochilus* be definitely suppressed.

Accordingly, the Secretary recommends that the Commission adopt as its Opinion the following:

1. *Leucochilus*, 1881, is theoretically excluded from being an objective synonym of *Leucochila*, 1860, but it might be, theoretically a subjective synonym; and

2. For the purpose of this Opinion, and on practical grounds (in order to prevent confusion), the Commission herewith considers *Leucochilus*, 1881, a homonym of *Leucochila*, 1860, and therefore not entitled to stand.

Opinion written by the Secretary.

The foregoing draft of Opinion was forwarded to B. B. Woodward of London, England, with request that he give the Commission the benefit of his views. He replied as follows:

Leucochilus and *Leucochila* are absolute homonyms. They are merely the masculine and feminine forms of one and the same name.

It is too generally overlooked that these inflections of gender were universally held by the early systematic zoologists to be such and not to qualify in any way for generic distinction. To alter this now would create an untold amount of disturbance in past nomenclature, which is quite unjustifiable and would be mischievous.

The framers of the original Rules were all good systematic zoologists as well as good scholars. They took this view so much as a matter of course that they did not think of specifying anything so obvious to them in their Rules. They never dreamt that a later school of enthusiastic but less well-informed naturalists (zoologically and classically) would arise to challenge it.

The Recommendation attached to Rule 36 does not really touch the present or similar cases, of which there are far too many for a piecemeal consideration of them to be profitably undertaken.

In my opinion the Commission would be best advised, taking advantage of the present instance, to lay down the principle that: "Names of genera differing only in their termination, when that is indicative solely of gender, cannot be employed for distinct genera, but must be considered to be homonyms." Occasion might be taken to point out that the frequently misquoted case of *Picus* and *Pica* does not apply here since these names are two distinct Latin substantives, not modern makeups and not merely variations in gender of one and the same word.

All papers were then forwarded to Commissioner Chapman for review and opinion. His report reads as follows:

Re *Leucochila* and *Leucochilus*, after examining the evidence for and against the use of *Leucochilus* Boettger, I have drawn the following conclusions:

1.—Since *Leucochilus* was suggested by Boettger as an equivalent term to *Leucochila* (but with emended spelling), of the section *P. armifera*, it is clearly a homonym of *Leucochila*.

2.—*Leucochilus* only differs in generic ending, and therefore it is inadvisable to retain it in such closely related groups where it would be a source of confusion.

3.—For the above reason that *Leucochilus* Boettger must be taken as a homonym, I would suggest the use of *Bifidaria* Sterki, as it has been properly defined and supplied with a type.

The papers were submitted also to Dr. Paul Bartsch, United States National Museum, who writes:

I have talked this matter over with Dr. Dall and we both agree with you.

With the foregoing data, the Secretary requested an informal ballot from the Commission. As basis for the vote the Secretary proposed the following summary:

Upon utilitarian grounds, regardless of all other considerations, the Commission hereby declares *Leucochilus*, 1881, as suppressed in favor of *Leucochila*, 1860; any other action would involve risk of lasting and constant confusion in two rather closely allied genera.

In Circular Letter No. 156, the Secretary reported as follows:

Eight (8) Commissioners (Chapman, Dabbene, Horvath, Neveu-Lemaire, Stiles, Stone, and Warren) accept the Opinion as written, without comment.

Three (3) Commissioners accept the general result of the Opinion, but comment as follows:

Hartert: Opinion concurred in "but NOT ON UTILITARIAN GROUNDS which is absolutely dangerous and objectionable! It is not in the conception of the 'Rules.'" [But cf. wording of suspension—C. W. S.]

Jordan (David Starr): "I vote with the affirmative on the view that the suspension of *Leucochilus* will avoid confusion. It is now on the basis that new names for new genera should not be formed by change of gender of old names. *Gasterosteia* Sauvage (not valid) was proposed for a section of *Gasterosteus*. But I shall vote that names differently spelled (except through carelessness) are different names until we have a definite decision. It is not, as Mr. Woodward writes, a matter of 'ignorance.' I am willing to take either view if properly defined and a majority agrees. In Ichthyology we have some 40 cases and an agreement is very desirable."

Jordan (Karl): "From the facts

(1) That Boettger says: 'ich halte die Benennung *Leucochilus* für . . . aufrecht' and

(2) That Boettger states *Leucochilus* = *Leucochila* Albers-Martens, it follows that Boettger did not propose a new name, but retained the old

name in an emended form. Such emendations were quite in vogue until recently. But an emended name is not a new name and is nomenclatorially identical with the name in its original spelling.

The question as to whether generic names differing in endings only should be treated as different does not arise here at all."

Commissioner Apstein writes: "*Leucochila* v. Martens und *Leucochilus* Boettger sind 2 verschiedene Namen und können deshalb neben einander bestehen." In reply to this note the Secretary wrote to Commissioner Apstein, "I interpret your vote as negative in the case of Circular Letter No. 131," to which Commissioner Apstein replied, "Ich stimme zu, *Leucochilus*, 1860." The Secretary is not yet clear in regard to Commissioner Apstein's vote but he interprets it again as permitting *Leucochilus*, 1881, and *Leucochila*, 1860, to exist together under the conditions mentioned in Circular Letter No. 131.

As eight (8) Commissioners agreed without reservation, as one Commissioner objected simply to the expression "upon utilitarian grounds," and as two other Commissioners agreed as to the end result, the Secretary suggested that the summary be amended as follows:

Alternative A.—SUMMARY: The Commission herewith suppresses *Leucochilus*, 1881, in favor of *Leucochila*, 1860; any other action would involve risk of lasting and constant confusion in two rather closely allied genera.

The foregoing summary would seem to meet the objection offered by Commissioner Hartert, and would also meet the viewpoint of Commissioner Karl Jordan, while it would at the same time give the result desired by all of the other Commissioners who voted in the affirmative. In case the Secretary has misinterpreted Commissioner Apstein's position, this summary would appear to meet his views also.

An alternative to the foregoing summary might read as follows:

Alternative B.—SUMMARY: *Leucochilus*, 1881, can be interpreted as an emendation of *Leucochila*, 1860; Boettger, 1881, inadvertently fell into error when he eliminated the type species *fallax*, from *Leucochila*.

The Secretary is prepared to change his vote to conform to this second summary in case a majority of the Commission prefers this to Alternative A. Under these circumstances he would rewrite and resubmit the Opinion.

Opinion prepared by Stiles.

Alternative A was approved by a vote of 13 to 1 as follows:

For Alternative A, thirteen (13) Commissioners: Apstein, Chapman, Dabbene, Handlirsch, Hartert, Horvath, Ishikawa, Jordan (D. S.), Jordan (K.), Silvestri, Stiles, Stone, Warren.

For Alternative B, one (1) Commissioner: Bather.

Not voting, four (4) Commissioners: Kolbe, Loennberg, Neveu-Lemaire, Stejneger.